

music, languages, special education, technology, media, and the arts has set the standard for secondary education in Minnesota. In 2004 and 2005, the school ranked as one of the top six schools in the State on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments reading and math scores.

Thomas Jefferson High School, which opened in 1970, has 1,748 students and prides itself for its academic rigor. During the past 3 years, 30 students have earned distinction as National Merit Scholar Semifinalists and Commended Scholars. Each year, over 150 students earn college credits at Jefferson by scoring three points or higher on advanced placement tests. After graduation, more than 80 percent of Jefferson students go on to postsecondary educational opportunities.

Academics alone, however, do not present the whole picture. According to the Thomas Jefferson High School mission statement: "The Jefferson High School Community will develop and nurture responsible leaders and enlightened citizens who challenge themselves to create the present and enrich the future." The teachers and administrators at Jefferson High are proud of their students' academic, athletic, and artistic accomplishments, especially when achieved in the spirit of the Thomas Jefferson core ethical values of respect, responsibility, integrity, citizenship, and honesty.

For example, in keeping with Jefferson's broad mission statement, students demonstrated their personal integrity and desire to serve others by working to raise over \$12,000 for hurricane relief and \$10,000 for the Red Cross relief efforts.

In addition, the Jefferson Marching Band, which is fondly known as the Pride of Minnesota, is a source of special luster and has performed at the Cotton Bowl, Alamo Bowl, Fiesta Bowl, and Tournament of Roses Parade. Students are also offered a choice of two orchestra programs.

The school does well in athletic competition. Over its 35-year history, Jefferson High School has won 51 State championships in hockey, soccer, football, baseball, and other men's and women's sports. Recent accomplishments of Jefferson sports teams include a 2004-2005 Boys State Soccer Championship, a 2004-2005 Boys' Hockey Lake Conference and 6AA Championship Title, and a 2003-2004 Girls State Alpine Ski Academic Championship.

Much of the credit for Thomas Jefferson High School's success belongs to its principal, Steve Hill, and the dedicated teachers. The students and staff at Thomas Jefferson High School understand that, in order to be successful, a school must go beyond achieving academic success; it must also provide a nurturing environment where students can develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for success throughout life. All of the faculty, staff, and students at Thomas Jefferson High School

should be very proud of their accomplishments.

I congratulate Thomas Jefferson High School in Bloomington for winning the Award for Excellence in Education and for its exceptional contributions to education in Minnesota.●

#### WILSHIRE PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAINT ANTHONY VILLAGE, MINNESOTA

● Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, today I honor Wilshire Park Elementary School, in Saint Anthony Village, MN, which recently earned an Award for Excellence in Education for its exceptional and innovative achievements in educating children.

Wilshire Park Elementary School is truly a model of educational success. Wilshire's motto is: "Making Kids #1 for Over 40 Years." The school's reputation is reflected in the fact that nearly half its pupils enter through open enrollment, and there is a long waiting list for acceptance. Families choose Wilshire because it is known for academic excellence and for its safe, caring environment.

Test scores at Wilshire Park Elementary School are well above the State average and continue to improve every year. Three years ago, Wilshire received three stars in reading and math from the Minnesota Department of Education. Two years ago, the school received four stars in reading and three in math. Last year, Wilshire received four stars in reading and five stars in math.

However, test scores and ratings alone do not fully represent a school's true success. The principal and teachers at Wilshire Park Elementary believe many other factors influence children's ability to learn, qualities often better revealed through personal stories describing an atmosphere of caring and nurturing.

The true sense of the Wilshire community is evident from the support the entire school gives to children experiencing tragedies in their lives. One Wilshire student has been on kidney dialysis for several years, waiting to receive a transplant. Last fall, the school held a dance to raise funds to help cover the family's medical expenses. Also, earlier this year, staff rallied to support a first-grader whose mother died suddenly.

Wilshire was the first school in the five-State area to have a K-Kids Club, which is a Kiwanis Club for children to work on projects to benefit the whole community.

Wilshire Park Elementary School is also proud of the tremendous volunteer support it receives from the community. The school currently has 252 active volunteers, of whom 70 to 80 work at the school at least 1 to 2 days per week. These volunteers not only include parents of Wilshire pupils; aunts, grandparents, and community members are also regulars in the volunteer room.

Much of the credit for Wilshire Park Elementary School's success belongs to its recently retired principal, Dr. Bonnie Kirkpatrick, and the dedicated teachers and staff. The pupils and staff at Wilshire Park Elementary School understand that, in order to be successful, a school must go beyond achieving academic success; it must also provide a nurturing environment where children can develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for success throughout life. All of the faculty, staff, and pupils at Wilshire Park Elementary School should be very proud of their accomplishments.

I congratulate Wilshire Park Elementary School in Saint Anthony Village for winning the Award for Excellence in Education and for its exceptional contributions to education in Minnesota.●

#### RENVILLE COUNTY WEST SCHOOL DISTRICT, RENVILLE, MINNESOTA

● Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, today I honor Renville County West School District, in Renville, MN, which recently earned an Award for Excellence in Education for its exceptional and innovative achievements in educating children.

Renville County West School District is truly a model of educational success. The district has struggled financially for many years, primarily as a result of declining enrollment. It has addressed its financial problems through multiple consolidations of many districts into a single district, and last year, the closing of yet another school building. These moves, while financially necessary, are extremely hard on the students, staff, and community.

While the district has been plagued by falling enrollment due to population trends, statutory operating debt, reductions in staff and programs, and staff development funds that have been suspended, the district maintains its commitment to quality education. Its schools have consistently made yearly progress toward the goals of No Child Left Behind.

Despite these challenges, test scores in Renville County West schools have improved over the past few years. Last year, Renville County West Elementary School earned four-star ratings in math and reading; and its high school earned a four-star rating in math. Renville County West's continued academic progress has also overcome changes created by greater numbers of special education, low-income, and minority students.

The statements of teachers and students offer yet another reflection of the success of the district. Social sciences teacher Daniel Rohman writes: "I have developed a senior economics class that gives kids a springboard into life. In this class, I teach the concepts of micro and macro but try to put it into real life examples that the kids have to work at. In this class I teach investments. We do mock

portfolios; we track stocks; we do government securities, 403s and 401s, IRAs, mutual funds, insurance plans, money market accounts, and on and on.

"I have had kids so interested in this class that they have gone into the securities profession as investment brokers, insurance sales, working for firms such as State Farm and Piper Jaffrey. Do you think that makes me proud? You bet it does. That is what teaching is all about. Seeing a kid make three times what I make and feeling good about it when they come back to share their success story with you and saying, 'Thank you, you made a difference in my life.'"

Molly Forkrud, a 2006 graduate of Renville, describes her academic career, writing: "I can honestly say in all four campuses, I have received a wonderful education. This education did not come from the walls, halls, or classrooms of certain buildings, but rather the consistent ambition of the teachers and staff who instructed me. The buildings themselves have had nothing to do with my education, but it's the people inside who have impacted my life as a student."

Although the district has struggled financially, it has made the financial commitment to fund an all-day kindergarten for all children, something the State of Minnesota has refused to provide.

Much of the credit for the Renville County West School District's success belongs to its Superintendent, Mr. Doug Conboy, and the dedicated principals, teachers, and staff. The students and staff at the Renville County West School District understand that in order to be successful, a school must go beyond achieving academic success. It must also provide a nurturing environment where students can develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for success throughout life. All of the faculty, staff, and students at the Renville County West School District should be very proud of their accomplishments.

I congratulate the Renville County West School District in Renville for winning the Award for Excellence in Education and for its exceptional contributions to education in Minnesota.●

#### SAINT MICHAEL-ALBERTVILLE HIGH SCHOOL, ALBERTVILLE, MINNESOTA

● Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, today I honor Saint Michael-Albertville High School, in Albertville, MN, which recently earned an Award for Excellence in Education for its exceptional and innovative achievements in educating children.

Saint Michael-Albertville High School is truly a model of educational success. Its students and staff recently completed a collaborative effort uniting the environmental sciences classes, studio art classes, and members of the community to create a mural, now displayed in the school's courtyard. The students also designed a flower garden

to beautify the building's landscaping. Each of the mural's components depicts one of the four seasons in Minnesota.

The mural, which was completed last November, was funded through a grant from the Minnesota Arts Board. Over 180 high school students contributed, under the direction of Mr. Danny Saathoff, an artist in residence. Students from the environmental sciences department helped develop the ideas for each component of the mural. Then studio art students transformed those ideas into a proposed design. A local business, Timberland Clothing Store, also helped install the finished mural in the courtyard.

Although the Award for Excellence is in recognition of the school's creation of a mural, its academic performance over the past few years also merits recognition. In 2005, the high school received five stars in reading and four stars in math from the Minnesota Department of Education, which is a significant improvement over the three-star rating the district received in reading and math in 2004. The school also offers a College in a Classroom Program, allowing high school students to take college-level courses and earn college credits through a partnership with St. Cloud State University.

Much of the credit for the Saint Michael-Albertville High School's success belongs to its Principal, Mark Minkler, and the dedicated teachers. The students and staff at Saint Michael-Albertville High School understand that, in order to be successful, a school must go beyond achieving academic success; it must also provide a nurturing environment where students can develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for success throughout life. All of the faculty, staff, and students at Saint Michael-Albertville High School should be very proud of their accomplishments.

I congratulate Saint Michael-Albertville High School in Albertville for winning the Award for Excellence in Education and for its exceptional contributions to education in Minnesota.●

#### TRIBUTE TO HELEN ARMSTRONG

● Mr. DODD. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to a gifted musician, successful entrepreneur, devoted wife and mother, constituent, and friend, Helen Armstrong, who passed away on April 28 of this year. Helen was an international virtuoso violinist who dedicated her life to enriching the lives of others through music.

Helen Armstrong was born on March 16, 1943, in Rockford, IL. Her career as a violinist began at the age of 3. Before long, she was enrolled at the Juilliard School where she quickly caught the eye of renowned instructors Ivan Galamian and Dorothy DeLay. She was among the select few chosen to study under them in pursuit of a solo career. Other violinists in this group include

Helen's childhood friend Yitzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zukerman. In 1976 Helen made her Lincoln Center debut and went on to perform with various orchestras including the Boston Pops, the Indianapolis Symphony, and the New Polish Philharmonic. She has also toured North America, Europe, and Asia as a recitalist.

But Helen Armstrong was not content to be a successful and highly accomplished musician. She was also an entrepreneur and philanthropist who brought music into the lives of others through performance and education. She founded Armstrong Chamber Concerts, Inc. and served as its artistic director for more than 22 years. What began one summer as a way to lure musicians out of New York City to perform in Helen's home in Washington, CT became a thriving enterprise encompassing performance series in Litchfield and Fairfield counties as well as Carnegie Hall recitals, corporate events, and educational programs in schools in Connecticut and New York City. At the heart of ACC is Helen's artistic vision to broaden public interest in chamber music through performance and education, and its primary focus has been to bring musical education to public and private schools through its unique Students' Music Enrichment Program. Over 100,000 students have benefited from this program thanks to Helen Armstrong's remarkable vision and dedication to this cause. One of the most noteworthy examples of Helen's benevolent spirit were her performances at a prison in Danbury. She counted those performances as some of her most rewarding outreach experiences, and said the music made the inmates feel that life was worth living. Helen dedicated her life to spreading her love of classical music, and she has touched the lives and hearts of countless citizens, including my own. I had the privilege of seeing Helen perform, and was truly captivated by her immense talent and passion. Her performance moved me to act as an honorary chairperson of the concert series she organized, and I am honored to have been associated with her organization.

Helen Armstrong was a remarkable woman in several respects. Along with her accomplishments as a solo violinist and founder of a successful nonprofit chamber music organization, she was a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother. She was widowed by her first husband, Alan Cohen, in 1978. Despite this terrible loss, Helen continued to promote ACC's mission and to perform while raising her two children. After a long relationship, she married Ajit Hutheesing in 1996. In addition to him, she is survived by her children Debbie and David, her grandchildren Brenden, Tyler, and Cailey, her sister Nancy, and her brother Robert. I offer my deepest condolences to all of them. They have lost a beloved member of their family. Helen's great talent and generous spirit will be sorely missed by them and countless others.●